



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**REGION 8**

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**<http://www.epa.gov/region8>**

Ref: EPR-N

Georgina Lampman, District Ranger  
Escalante Ranger District  
PO Box 246  
Escalante, UT 84726

RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement,  
Pockets Resource Management Project,  
Dixie National Forest, CEQ#: 20070286

Dear Ms. Lampman:

In accordance with EPA's responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 42 U.S.C. Section 4332(2)(C), and our authorities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 7609, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 (EPA) has reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Pockets Resource Management Project on the Escalante Ranger District of the Dixie National Forest.

EPA's review found the FEIS responsive to comments and questions submitted for the Draft EIS. For the DEIS, EPA had expressed concerns regarding potential water quality impacts resulting from the Proposed Action to Antimony Creek, the only perennial stream in the project area.

The Proposed Action includes:

- About 3,715 acres of commercial harvest of spruce/fir timber to remove beetle-infested and recently killed trees and subsequent pre-commercial thinning on 548 acres.
- Aspen management actions include approximately 350 acres of clear-cutting and 433 acres of treatment to remove understory conifers.
- Related road management actions include 11.1 miles of new road construction, all of which would be decommissioned following the project. In addition, 7.8 miles of currently unauthorized roads would be designated as NFS roads, 9.5 miles of existing roads will be improved, and an additional 4.3 miles of road would be decommissioned.

The FEIS and the ROD have clarified the extent of temporary road construction and provided additional requested information on Soil and Water Conservation Practices conducted to reduce or avoid soil erosion and sedimentation impacts to perennial and intermittent streams. In addition, the ROD states that route 4701 which crosses Antimony Creek will be decommissioned and obliterated. EPA supports this action which would promote development of cold-water aquatic habitat within Antimony Creek by decreasing sedimentation to the stream channel.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the FEIS and the ROD. If you have questions regarding EPA's comments, please contact me at (303) 312-6004 or Larry Kimmel, EIS project manager, at (303) 312-6659.

Sincerely,

/s/

Larry Svoboda  
Director, NEPA Program  
Office of Ecosystems Protection and Remediation